

**ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO EXAMINE THE
ADJUDICATION, DISPOSITION, AND REGISTRATION OF
JUVENILE SEX OFFENDERS**

CHAPTER 709

H.B. No. 1144

AN ACT

relating to establishing a task force to examine the adjudication, disposition, and registration of juvenile sex offenders.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas:

**SECTION 1. TASK FORCE ON IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR JUVENILES
ADJUDICATED OF SEXUAL OFFENSES. (a) In this Act:**

(1) "Juvenile sex offender" means a person subject to the jurisdiction of a juvenile court for conduct that constitutes an offense for which registration as a sex offender is required under Chapter 62, Code of Criminal Procedure.

(2) "Task force" means the Task Force on Improving Outcomes for Juveniles Adjudicated of Sexual Offenses.

(b) The Task Force on Improving Outcomes for Juveniles Adjudicated of Sexual Offenses is established. The purpose of the task force is to make policy recommendations to improve the outcomes for juvenile sex offenders after studying:

(1) the adjudication and disposition processes and programs for juvenile sex offenders;

(2) counseling, mental health, or other services provided by the state or local juvenile probation departments to juvenile sex offenders;

(3) the sex offender registration process for juveniles; and

(4) any other issue related to improving the outcomes for juvenile sex offenders.

(c) The task force is composed of the following members:

(1) the executive director of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department or the executive director's designee;

(2) the commissioner of the Department of Family and Protective Services or the commissioner's designee;

(3) one representative designated by the Crime Records Service of the Department of Public Safety who has experience with the department's sex offender registry;

(4) one representative designated by the Council on Sex Offender Treatment;

(5) one representative designated by Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas;

(6) one representative designated by the Texas Association for the Protection of Children;

(7) one representative designated by Texans Care for Children;

(8) one private provider of juvenile sex offender treatment from a rural county and one private provider of juvenile sex offender treatment from an urban county, appointed by the governor;

(9) one judge from a rural county and one judge from an urban county, appointed by the governor;

(10) one law enforcement official from a rural county and one law enforcement official from an urban county, appointed by the governor;

(11) one prosecutor from a rural county and one prosecutor from an urban county, appointed by the governor;

(12) one juvenile probation officer from a rural county and one juvenile probation officer from an urban county, appointed by the governor;

(13) one juvenile public defender from a rural county and one juvenile public defender from an urban county, appointed by the governor; and

(14) one academic researcher from an accredited university who specializes in juvenile justice, appointed by the governor.

(d) The governor shall designate a member of the task force to serve as presiding officer.

(e) The presiding officer may designate additional experts to serve as advisors to the task force.

(f) A person designated to make an appointment of a member of the task force shall make the appointment not later than the 60th day after the effective date of this Act. The designated person shall fill a vacancy in the task force or a vacancy in the position of presiding officer of the task force by the appointment of another person with the same qualifications as the original appointee.

(g) The presiding officer shall call the initial meeting of the task force on or before December 1, 2015. The task force shall meet at the times and places that the presiding officer determines are appropriate.

(h) A member of the task force is not entitled to compensation but may receive reimbursement for the member's actual and necessary expenses incurred in attending meetings of the task force and performing other official duties authorized by the presiding officer of the task force, if funding is available.

(i) The task force may request meeting facilities, data, clerical assistance, and other assistance from any department, agency, institution, office, or political subdivision of this state.

(j) The task force may consult with any relevant experts and stakeholders, including:

- (1) juvenile sex offenders;
- (2) family members of juvenile sex offenders;
- (3) mental health experts;
- (4) public school district administrators; and
- (5) higher education administrators.

(k) State funds may not be appropriated for purposes of the task force. The task force may apply for, receive, and accept grants of funds or other contributions as appropriate to assist in the performance of its duties. The task force may contract for consultants or technical assistance.

(l) The task force is not subject to Chapter 2110, Government Code.

SECTION 2. DUTIES OF TASK FORCE. (a) The task force shall:

(1) solicit and review information and hear testimony relevant to the purposes of the task force from individuals, state and local agencies, community-based organizations, and other public and private organizations;

(2) review the adjudication and disposition processes and programs for juvenile sex offenders, including:

(A) the consistency in adjudication and disposition processes across the state;

(B) the training provided to judges, law enforcement officers, parole and probation officers, and other juvenile service providers on the differences between juvenile and adult sex offenders regarding the potential for rehabilitation through treatment; and

(C) training provided to judges, law enforcement officers, parole and probation officers, and other juvenile service providers regarding the most effective way to protect the community by reducing recidivism rates among juvenile sex offenders;

(3) review juvenile sex offender registration, including:

(A) the effectiveness of juvenile sex offender registration in reducing recidivism rates;

(B) statistical information regarding juveniles required to register as sex offenders;

(C) the impact of juvenile sex offender registration on a juvenile, including a juvenile's ability to access education, obtain housing, and gain employment; and

(D) the impact of labeling a juvenile as a juvenile sex offender on the family of the juvenile;

(4) review counseling, mental health, or other services provided to juvenile sex offenders, including:

(A) the effectiveness of the services in the rehabilitation of juvenile sex offenders and the reduction of recidivism rates; and

(B) the current shortage of juvenile sex offender service providers; and

(5) review statistical information regarding the frequency of juvenile sex offenders being victims of abuse or neglect or witnesses to family violence.

(b) The task force shall adopt rules necessary to fulfill the task force's duties under this Act.

SECTION 3. REPORT. (a) The task force shall prepare a report that includes:

(1) a description of the activities of the task force;

(2) the findings and recommendations of the task force, including proposed policy recommendations related to:

(A) the provision of coordinated support services to juvenile sex offenders; and

(B) the most effective strategy to reduce recidivism rates and improve outcomes for juvenile sex offenders; and

(3) any related proposals for legislation or other matters the task force considers appropriate.

(b) Not later than December 1, 2016, the task force shall deliver the report of the task force's findings and recommendations to:

(1) the governor;

(2) the lieutenant governor;

(3) the speaker of the house of representatives;

(4) the standing committees of each house of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over criminal justice matters;

(5) the executive director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice;

(6) the executive director of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department;

(7) each state agency and nonprofit organization represented on the task force; and

(8) any other appropriate agency of this state.

SECTION 4. EXPIRATION. The task force is abolished and this Act expires September 1, 2017.

SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

Passed by the House on May 15, 2015: Yeas 119, Nays 20, 2 present, not voting;
passed by the Senate on May 25, 2015: Yeas 27, Nays 4.

Approved June 17, 2015.

Effective June 17, 2015.